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# BEYOND · THE · VEIL

*Brotherton*





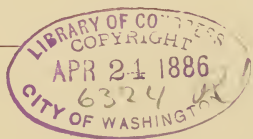


# *BEYOND THE VEIL*

*BY*

*Alice Williams Brotherton*

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CHICAGO  
CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY  
175 DEARBORN STREET  
1886

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## PRELUDE.

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The end is not in the grave.  
There is a time  
To rest, as to come and go  
On God's errands, to and fro,—  
Like a half-writ rhyme  
If my life must be laid by,  
For a little space:  
As the poet's soul is stirred  
With new insight and the word  
Speeds at length to its right place ;  
So this life in which I see  
But half-meanings, in the grave  
Laid away,  
In that Life whereto I tend—  
Some day, some happy day,  
Waking refreshed and calm and brave,  
I shall read clear, to its end.





## BEYOND THE VEIL.

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*One weary with much weeping slept and dreamed :—*

A poor soul wandering in the outer gloom  
Which lies beyond the portal of the tomb,  
Felt a wild longing in its inmost breast  
To look upon the City of the Blest.  
And it arose and fled through shadows grey  
With never guide except that wish alone,  
Which drew it, half-resisting, ever on,  
Communing sadly with itself alway :—  
“It might have been—Woe, woe ! it might have  
    been  
That I, too, through the gate had entered in,  
And walked with the pure souls to whom the grace  
Is given to look upon Jehovah’s face,  
And work His will (as once on earth) in heaven.

But now mine hour is passed. No place is given,  
Though long with bitter weeping I have sought,  
Wherein my expiation might be wrought :  
My day is sinned away : too late, *too late*  
Cometh repentance!

“ Yet unto the gate  
Of the fair city, New Jerusalem,  
Whose rainbow tinted walls of carven gem  
Proclaim unto God’s children from afar  
Their Father’s home where many mansions are—  
I fain would go ; to bend a single glance  
Upon the glory of the place. Perchance,  
(For I will plead so humbly !) it may be  
The gracious Angel-guard will pity me  
Nor wave me from the gate, but grant my prayer  
To stand and gaze one little moment there,  
Viewing the shining streets whereon have trod  
The feet of those who journey up to God !  
Then, after that one look, I will retrace  
Swiftly my steps to my appointed place.”

So saying, swift advancing, on it passed,  
Leaving the gloom behind it : till at last  
It saw the City of the Blest appear :  
Whose walls far reaching, as it drew more near,  
Shone—even as the prophet has foretold—  
With a great shining like transparent gold,  
With beryl and with jacinth, jasper-stone,  
Sardius and amethyst, emerald, chalcedon,  
And myriad gems beside, whose marvellous sheen  
Was such as never mortal eye hath seen.

But lo, the gates, when it had come thus far,  
Stood open wide, with never bolt or bar :  
Nor any warder with uplifted sword  
And angry frown was there the place to guard.  
Then the soul, listening, trembling—half with fear  
Half with an awe-filled reverence—drew near  
And looked into the city wistfully.  
There was a sound of far-off melody.  
But all the streets were still, nor was there sight  
Of any soul : only a wondrous light  
Filled all the place.

And straight a wild desire  
Seized on the soul to view the glory nigher.  
“Perchance this hour the Angels all are gone  
Deeper into the City where the throne  
Must be,” it said, “and so the streets are still.  
Ah, if I might but venture ! Yea, I will.  
Since none is here to hinder sure I may  
Just enter in and go a little way !”

Thus saying, through the open gate it strayed,  
At first with bated breath and sore afraid,  
Then, since none did molest it, bolder grown,  
With ever-quickenings steps it hastened on,  
Leaving the shining portals far behind :  
And knew it not, but wandered on to find  
Fresh marvels and new beauties everywhere,—  
Till, of a sudden pausing, it was 'ware  
Of a bright Presence swiftly drawing near.  
And fain it would have fled but that its fear  
Forbade, nor was there any place to hide.  
Then the swift Presence halting at its side

Looked it with piercing glances through and  
through  
And queried :—“ Soul, whence art thou ? ” And it  
knew  
The Crucified ; and dared not meet His frown,  
But crying :—“ Pity, Lord ! Forgive ! ” fell down  
Weeping and quaking at his feet.

Then He :—

“ What have I to forgive ? ”

So, falteringly,

There at the Master's feet with sob and wail  
The stricken soul poured forth the whole sad tale—  
How it had been a sinner upon Earth,  
And in the After-World amid the dearth  
And chill and darkness lying there without,  
Had wandered long, a prey to fear and doubt  
And evil thoughts and wild despair : until—  
Drawn by an impulse stronger than its will—  
It rose and fled, nor paused until it stood.  
Awe-filled, before the City of the Good.

Finding no warder at the outer gate,  
No bolt or bar nor any hindrance set,  
Nor seraphim with flaming dreadful sword :  
Tremblingly it had ventured hitherward  
Into the city, led by a wild hope  
To look upon the glory : then to grope  
Its way again unto its wonted place.

So paused, and looking up into His face  
Wondered exceedingly to see no frown  
Thereon, but only mild eyes looking down  
Upon it, kneeling. And a voice said "Nay,  
Why then depart when thou art free to stay?"  
"Master, O mock me not!" the spirit cried,  
"Pity me rather : sorely am I tried!"  
"Alas, poor soul!" He said "Hast never heard  
That which is written in the Holy Word :—  
'Whoso shall hear My voice and come to Me  
I will in no wise cast out' ? Child, for thee  
The promise holds good also. Thou art here,  
Do I reject thee ? Put away thy fear."

“Nay”, the soul faltered, “but I heard no voice,  
Between the good and evil made no choice.  
The time was passed. I only longed to flee  
Out of the gloom, and hither come and see  
The beauty and the glory forfeited  
By mine own sinfulness !”

“Yea, child”, He said’

“And that same *longing* was the Father’s voice.  
None cometh unto me save of His choice.  
Poor Soul ! And didst thou think that little space  
Of time on Earth was all wherein the grace  
Of God was open to thee ?—that the tomb  
Sealed once for good or ill thy final doom ?  
And were that like to One whose tenderness  
Is infinite as His Almightyness ?  
Didst thou not dream that, in the outmost part  
Of all, His voice divine might reach the heart,  
And draw thee, ever nearer, on and on  
Unto Himself and Me ? So hath He done.  
Peace ! Though thou hast not chosen Me indeed,  
Have I not chosen thee ? I know thy need

Of Me, and bid thee ‘Come, abide with me.’  
Within the City there is room for thee.  
And that thou well mayst know this thing is true  
I give a sign,—What would’st thou I should do ?  
What is thine inmost wish ? Look up and speak !”  
The awe-struck soul arose, and answered meek :—  
“ Master ! If I might touch thy garment’s hem  
And be made clean ! Thou didst thus unto them—  
The loathly lepers once in Palestine,—  
O, if Thou wouldst but lay Thy hand divine  
Upon me now, this leprosy of sin,  
This weight of pain and fear I bear within,  
Would fall from off me like a garment vile !”  
“ Lo, it is done !” He answered with a smile.

And straight it seemed as if from off its sight  
The scales had fallen, for to left and right,  
Near and afar it saw a gracious band  
Of beautiful, tall, shining Angels stand,  
Which had been with them from the first. Not strange  
Their faces seemed, but, with some glorious change,  
Like unto those of dear friends known and lost



On Earth. And there was none of all that host  
But did rejoice with it exceedingly,  
Making its joy their own : “ Now glory be ”  
(They cried) “ unto the Lord ! Without the gate  
No wistful soul need trembling stand and wait.  
No need to knock—the doors stand open wide,  
Whoso doth seek shall find the Crucified.  
Sister ! we saw thee enter in, though thou  
Couldst see us (for thine eyes were sealed), but now.  
Come, thou belovèd, with us—for there be  
Full many here, have waited long for thee ! ”

The Master gently bade :—“ Soul, go thy ways  
With these: and after, for our Father’s praise—  
To whose dear Name for aye all praise shall be !—  
Some task there shall be given unto thee:  
For there is need of service from us all.  
Go now and rest until thou hear the call.  
My peace be with thee, daughter ! ”

Then with eyes  
Lifted and filled with tears of glad surprise,  
And smiling lips, and brow from whence was gone

All shade of sin, the pardoned soul passed on  
 Circled about by the rejoicing throng:  
 And a new voice was added to the song.

*And with a start the sleeper, in the face  
 Of the glad soul that entered into grace,  
 Of a sudden knew—her own : and, waking, went  
 Upon her way filled with a great content.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Not here the end—not here !*

*Infinite Tenderness*

*Hath infinite ways, we know,*

*To save and bless.*

*Nor dooms to eternal woe*

*The soul that learns,—*

*Through Sin (if it must be so !)*

*That scars and burns.*

*Since all Shadow comes from Light :*

*Having woe to bud and grow,*

*Surely Good from Sin, at last,*

*Shall spring also.*



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